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Distribution of Publications

Private Publications

A Member may distribute a purely informational and instructional printed publication created by a private entity. If the private document is to be distributed under the Frank the document must comply with the Franking Regulations.

Contact the Franking Commission at x59337.

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Government Publications

A Member may distribute government publications.

A report, document, or publication distributed by a Member may not contain a notice that it is sent with "the compliments" of the Member. (44 U.S.C. §1106).

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Electronic Communications

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to electronic communications (Internet, fax machines, etc.) are reimbursable. All official electronic communication content must comply with the Franking Regulations.

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Subscribed E-mail updates

A subscribed e-mail update is an e-mail sent to individuals who have subscribed to an e-mail list. Members must notify individuals who subscribe to e-mail updates that the individual is authorizing the Member to send regular e-mail updates from the Member's office to the individual's e-mail account. All e-mail

updates to subscribers must contain an option that enables the individual to unsubscribe from the e-mail list. Members may send subscribed e-mail updates without obtaining an advisory opinion.

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Non-subscribed E-mail updates

If each e-mail address used in a mass communication was not obtained with consent for subscribed e-mail updates, then the Member must receive a Franking Advisory prior to the distribution of the mass communication.

Please see Unsolicited Mass Communications Restrictions.

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Franked Mail

Postage expenses of Frankable mail are reimbursable in accordance with the regulations contained in this Members' Congressional Handbook.

Contents of official mailings paid for through the MRA are subject to the regulations of the Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards (Franking Commission)(x59337).

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Use of the Frank

1. Pursuant to the provisions of 39 U.S.C. §3210, each Member is entitled to the privilege of sending mail as Franked mail in order to assist and expedite the conduct of the official business, activities, and duties of the Congress of the United States.

For information regarding the use of the Frank, refer to the Franking Regulations (available from the Franking Commission x59337).

2. Mail to be delivered outside the United States, its territories and possessions (other than mail matter bearing an APO or FPO address for delivery through the United States military mail system), is not eligible for distribution under the Frank and may be sent with stamps. In applicable circumstances the Member may also use the following:

a. For official mail to U.S. Embassies and missions abroad, the Department of State provides diplomatic pouch service. For information regarding this service, contact House Postal Operations at x53856.

b. House documents (committee hearings, reports, and prints) which are not

available for purchase from the Government Printing Office, and which are to be sent to foreign countries, may be sent to the Library of Congress for forwarding through the Exchange and Gifts Division. For information regarding this program, contact the Library of Congress, Exchange and Gifts Division at x75243.

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Accounting

for the use of the Frank in the Washington, D.C., Congressional Office

1. The Office of Finance assigns a 5-digit billing account number to each Member.
2. House Postal Operations assigns a bar code to each Member. The bar code must be printed on all letter-sized envelopes, postcards, Kraft envelopes and labels procured in support of the official and representational duties of the Member's Washington, D.C., office.
3. Mail collected by House Postal Operations for distribution via the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) will be accounted for by House Postal Operations' automated system. House Postal Operations prepares a monthly statement of postal charges for Franked mail they have processed and provides a copy of this statement to the Office of Finance who forwards it to the USPS. An informational copy is provided directly to the Member.
4. Direct District Office Pouch Service (DDOP) or orange bag is available to expedite mail between the Washington, D.C. and district congressional offices. The cost of DDOP service is charged at the Priority Mail rate and is accounted for by House Postal Operations.
5. The Open and Distribute service is available to expedite the delivery of first class mail between the Washington, D.C. office and district addresses. Each piece of mail sent via the Open and Distribute service is charged at the First Class Mail rate and is accounted for by House Postal Operations.
6. Non-permit mail processed by House Postal Operations for distribution via the USPS, (small packages, oversized envelopes, flags, etc.), will be accounted for by House Postal Operations. House Postal Operations prepares a monthly statement of postal charges for Franked mail they have processed and forwards it to the USPS. An informational copy is provided directly to the Member.

For information regarding the use of these services contact House Postal Operations at x53856.

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Bulk Standard Mailings in the Washington, D.C., Congressional Office

1. A bulk Standard Mailing (formerly third-class mail) is defined by the USPS as a mailing consisting of at least 200 pieces or weighing 50 or more pounds.

2. If bulk Standard Mailings are to be distributed directly by the Washington, D.C. office via the USPS, the Member must apply to use the G300 House mail permit number.

3. A bulk mailing distributed directly by the Washington, D.C., office via the USPS must be deposited at a U.S. Bulk Mail Acceptance Center and must be accompanied by a completed Statement of Mailing form (PS 3602R or PS 3605R Priority Drop Shipment) a copy of which should be retained by the Member's office.

4. Bulk mail processed by mail houses for distribution via the USPS will be accounted for on a Statement of Mailing form.

5. The mail houses will notify USPS of the charges incurred. Members should request that the mail houses provide an informational copy of these charges on PS 3602R forms directly to the Member. This will help in the completion of the quarterly mass mailing report Members submit to the Finance Office.

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Mass Mailings

A mass mailing is any unsolicited mailing of substantially identical content to more than 500 persons in a session of Congress.

Members may not send mass mailings outside of the district from which elected. (39 U.S.C. § 3210)

All mass mailings must receive an advisory opinion from the Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards (Franking Commission) prior to mailing.

Any printed material sent out as a mass mailing without a Franking Advisory Opinion is reimbursable only if the Franking Commission subsequently deems the mailing Frankable.

Federal law requires each mass mailing sent by a Member of Congress to display the following disclaimer:

"This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense."

The notice must appear prominently on the front page of a letter, on the front of the envelope or near the mailing panel, or on the first page of a self-mailer. It must appear horizontally and set apart from other text by lines of spacing and printed in type size not smaller than 7 point.

Member offices are required to submit a completed quarterly Mass Mail Reporting Form to the Office of Finance within 2 weeks after the closing of the reporting period. If the office did not send mass mail in that period, the form must still be submitted.

Mailing costs are disclosed in the quarterly Statement of Disbursements for the House. (2 U.S.C. §59h).

Contact the Franking Commission at x59337.

See Use of the Frank (28).

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District Office(s) Monthly Reporting

Each Member must provide a monthly accounting of Franked mail costs sent out of each of their district offices.

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Certification of Franked Mail

1. If a Member does not choose to use a postage meter to account for district office mail, the Member must account for Franked mail directly deposited to the USPS on the Member District Office Certification of Franked Mail form.
2. The Member District Office Certification of Franked Mail form must be completed by each district office on a monthly basis and received by the Office of Postal Operations for processing by the second business day following the end of the month. The submitted form must have the Member's original signature certifying its accuracy. The Office of Postal Operations will forward this information to the USPS.
3. If the Member District Office Certification of Franked Mail is 30 days delinquent the CAO will notify the Member. 30 days after notification of delinquency the Franked mail usage for the unreported month will be estimated and deducted from the MRA.

Member District Office Certification of Franked Mail forms are available from Postal Operations, x53856.

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Postage Meters

1. As an alternative to the Member District Office Certification of Franked Mail form, Members may account for their Franked mail via a postage meter.
2. Members must contact Office Systems Management at x53994 prior to procuring a postage meter.
3. At the end of each month, the postage meter vendor will forward a statement of the applicable postage charges for the month directly to the USPS and will provide an informational copy of this statement to the Member's Washington, D.C. Congressional office.

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Bulk Standard Mailings in the District Office

1. A bulk Standard Mailing (formerly third-class mail) is defined by the USPS as a mailing consisting of at least 200 pieces or weighing 50 or more pounds.
2. A bulk standard mailing distributed directly by the district office via the USPS must be deposited at a U.S. Bulk Mail Acceptance Center and must be accompanied by a completed Statement of Mailing form (PS 3602R or PS 3605R Priority Drop Shipment) a copy of which should be retained by the Member's office.
3. Bulk standard mail processed by mail houses for distribution via the USPS will be accounted for on a Statement of Mailing form.
4. The mail houses will notify USPS of the charges incurred. Members should request that the mail houses provide an informational copy of these charges on PS 3602R forms directly to the Member. This will help in the completion of the quarterly mass mailing report Members submit to the Finance Office.

See Mail Preparation (32).

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USPS Franked Mail Monthly Statement

1. The Office of Finance completes a monthly summary of postage charges of Franked mail not otherwise reported on a PS 3605R or PS 3602R, and will forward this summary to the USPS by the seventh working day following the end of the month.
2. Each month the USPS will prepare a USPS Franked Mail Monthly Statement listing the postage expenses of all Franked mail incurred in that month. The USPS will forward this statement directly to the Office of Finance for payment from the MRA and will provide an informational copy to the Member's Washington, D.C., congressional office.
3. Members should immediately reconcile this USPS statement with their copies of bills. If any discrepancies exist, please contact the Finance Office.

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USPS Notice of Balance

On a monthly basis, the USPS will send the Member and Postal Operations a notice of the amount used for official mail.

The Postmaster general may not deliver official mail the cost of which is in excess of the authorized MRA.

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Mail Preparation

Ordinary and necessary expenses associated with the printing and preparation of Member correspondence are reimbursable. Franking expenses associated with all mailings will be deducted from the MRA.

See Bulk Mailings (29 & 31).

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Mailing Lists

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the procurement and production of mailing lists may be reimbursed under the following circumstances: the list contains information about individuals within the Member's district; the list was procured or compiled as a result of a bona fide arms length marketplace transaction; and the list does not contain any campaign, campaign related, or political party information.

Members may not purchase or acquire mailing lists from their campaign offices unless the lists are available on the same terms to other entities through an arms length marketplace transaction. Official mailing lists may not be shared with a Member's campaign committee, any other campaign entity, or otherwise be used for campaign purposes.

39 U.S.C. § 2910 prohibits Members from sending any mass mailings outside of the district from which elected. Refer to the Franking Regulations.

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Inside Mail

1. Inside Mail is a delivery service for the transmittal of inter-office communications provided by House Postal Operations, pursuant to the regulations established by the Committee on House Administration. Inside mail service is available among offices in the Capitol, the House and Senate Office Buildings, the Library of Congress, the White House, the State Department, and the Social Security Administration.

2. Inside mail is provided to support the conduct of the official business of Members, committees, Officers of the House, and Congressional Staff Organizations.

3. Inside mail service may not be used to circulate letters which are personal or campaign-related, or which constitute commercial advertising except when postage is paid for with personal expenses.

4. All mail to be delivered via inside mail should be clearly marked Inside Mail and should be deposited in an Inside Mailbox.

5. Authorized items for circulation of inside mail include:

a. A Dear Colleague or similar correspondence relating to the official and representational business of the Member. This correspondence must be on official letterhead and signed by the Member.

b. A position paper, report, legislative analysis, or any material published or produced by another individual or organization that a Member wishes to circulate. This correspondence must be accompanied by a signed cover letter, on official letterhead. A copy of the cover letter must be attached to each item to be distributed.

c. Franked mail.

d. Stamped mail.

e. Mail for which a delivery fee has been paid.

f. Mail in a reusable blue U.S. House of Representatives Inside Mail envelope.

g. Mail produced by Congressional Staff Organizations registered with the Committee on House Administration.

Dear Colleague letters and similar correspondence must be transmitted to House Postal Operations, in the appropriate quantity, with a cover letter signed by the Member, indicating to whom the mailing should be distributed. For information regarding these procedures, contact House Postal Operations at x53856.

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Newspaper Inserts

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the production and distribution of newspaper inserts are reimbursable. The content must be in compliance with the Franking Regulations.

There are certain election-related restrictions on mass communications.

See Unsolicited Mass Communication Restrictions (35).

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Postal Expenses

Postal expenses incurred only when the Frank is insufficient, such as certified, registered, insured, express, foreign mail, and stamped, self-addressed envelopes related to the recovery of official items, are reimbursable. Postage may not be used in lieu of the Frank. All mailings initiated by a Member must be in compliance with the Franking Regulations.

Members must return unused postage stamps to the Office of Postal Operations at the end of a Member's service in the House.

Contact the Committee on House Administration at x58281.

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Printing and Production

Printed materials produced by the Member are reimbursable when they are in compliance with the Franking Regulations. Reimbursable printing and production expenses include, but are not limited to:

1. Newsletters, postal patron mailings, mass mailings, notices of town hall meetings or notices of personal appearance of the Member at an official event
2. Administrative papers (casework tracking forms, personnel record forms, etc.)
3. Legislative papers (bills, drafts, summaries, amendments, etc.)
4. Business cards for Members and their employees
5. Stuffing, sealing, and associated expenses relating to printing and sending official mail

If printed materials are to be sent under the Frank, a written advisory may be required.

See Use of the Frank (28) and Unsolicited Mass Communication Restrictions (35).

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Stationery

Ordinary and necessary expenses associated with the printing and production of official stationery are reimbursable. Official stationery may be procured from the Government Printing Office (44 U.S.C. §734).

Contact the Congressional Printing Management Division at 202-512-0224 and the Office of Publication Services at x51908 for stationery requests.

Additional stationery requests (writing paper, bond, etc.) are reimbursable.

Samples of such stationery are available from the Office of Publication Services.

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Appearance

Official stationery must contain the following information:

1. Member's name
2. Member's district and state
3. Congress of the United States, House of Representatives, or comparable language

Official stationery may not contain the following information:

1. Seals other than the Great Seal, Congressional Seal, or State Seal
2. Member's political party identification
3. Slogans
4. Private entity information or endorsement
5. Campaign contact information (e.g. address, phone number, e-mail address)
6. Greetings

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Use

Official stationery may be used only for a letter or other document the content of which complies with the Franking Regulations. Contact the Franking Commission at x59337 for information on content of official correspondence.

Contact the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct at x57103 for information on the use of official stationery.

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Business Cards

Ordinary and necessary expenses for business cards for Members and employees are reimbursable. The content of business cards must comply with the Franking Regulations. Business cards must contain the name of the employing authority and accurately describe the position to which the employee has been appointed.

Business cards may be obtained through Office Supply Service x53321.

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Unsolicited Mass Communication Restrictions

Unsolicited mass communication is defined consistent with Franking Regulations as any unsolicited communication of substantially identical content to 500 or more persons in a session of Congress.

Except where noted, unsolicited mass communications, regardless of the means of transmittal, must receive an Advisory opinion from the Franking Commission, prior to dissemination. Advisory Opinions may be obtained from the Franking Commission at x59337.

Expenditures from the MRA for unsolicited mass communications, regardless of the means of transmittal, are prohibited if such communication occurs fewer than 90 days immediately before the date of any primary or general election (whether regular, special, or runoff) in which the Member's name will appear on an official ballot for election or re-election to public office.

Examples of unsolicited mass communications are:

1. Radio, TV, internet, or newspaper advertisements of town hall meetings or of a personal appearance of the Member and/or the Member's employees at an official event
2. Mass mailings
3. Newspaper inserts
4. Mass automated phone calls
5. Mass Facsimiles
6. Posters, flyers, leaflets, handouts, etc., that are distributed as mass communications
7. Radio programs aired on broadcast time purchased with official funds
8. Video or audio communication for which official funds are expended for production and distribution
9. Mass e-mail communications distributed to a non-subscribed e-mailing list

This restriction does not apply to the following:

1. Direct responses to communications (solicited communications)
2. Communications to Members of Congress and other government officials
3. News releases, press releases, or media releases (written or recorded communications from Members, directed at the news media), in any format. Note that expenses for production and transmittal are reimbursable; expenses for satellite downlink and broadcast are not reimbursable.
4. Web sites (including a Member's official web site) and other electronic bulletin boards on which information is posted for voluntary public access

5. Advertisements for employee position and internship openings, U.S. Military Academy Days, and An Artistic Discovery
6. Member's participation in a media hosted interview or program
7. Previously recorded programs and public service announcements aired at the discretion of a media outlet, when no expenses are incurred by the Member
8. Purchases of research materials, including videotapes, audiotapes, and other electronic media
9. Video teleconferencing services
10. Mass e-mail communications distributed to a subscribed e-mailing list.

Please see Electronic Communications.

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Web Sites

World Wide Web sites paid for with official funds (Web sites) are a series of centrally maintained Web pages, accessible to the public via the Internet and stored on a specific host. The home page is the first accessible page for that site.

1. Ordinary and necessary expenses associated with the creation and continued operation of Web sites, in support of the Member's official and representational duties, are reimbursable.
2. Member's Web sites must be located in the HOUSE.GOV host-domain and may be maintained by either House Information Resources (HIR), the Member's congressional office, or a private vendor.
3. Member's Web sites may link to Committee Web sites, but Committee Web sites may not be located on Web sites paid for by the MRA.
4. Congressional Member Organizations (CMOs) may not create or operate independent Web sites. Members may include information within their Web site about CMO issues and activities. All CMO references within a Web site must relate to the Member's official and representational duties.
5. HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.
6. Web sites should be ADA compliant.

See Contractors (7).

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Content

The content of a Member's Web site:

1. May not include personal, political, or campaign information.
2. May not be directly linked or refer to Web sites created or operated by a campaign or any campaign related entity including political parties and campaign committees.
3. May not include grassroots lobbying or solicit support for a Member's position.
4. May not generate, circulate, solicit, or encourage signing petitions.
5. May not include any advertisement for any private individual, firm, or corporation, or imply in any manner that the government endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service.

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Name (URL)

The URL name for an official Web site located in the HOUSE.GOV domain must be recognizably derivative or representative of the name of the Member or the name of the office sponsoring the Web site.

The URL name for an official Web site located in the HOUSE.GOV domain may not:

1. Be a slogan.
2. Imply in any manner that the House endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service.

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Security

All House systems and devices with connections to the Internet must comply with network and security guidelines of the Committee on House Administration. These guidelines include the following:

1. Offices must send a written request for access to Internet services to HIR. Technical requirements will be provided to each office by HIR.

2. All users authorized to access the Internet must have unique identifiers and password security.

3. Users must immediately report any unauthorized access or unusual system activities to HIR Security Office (x66448). HIR will investigate any breaches of the Internet security system.

4. Internet access will be installed only after determination by HIR that anti-virus software has been installed on the Member's computer system.

Users with current anti-virus software provided by the House and installed on in-office computers may download software, patches, and fixes. Users are responsible for complying with any legal or contractual requirements from the owners of the software that is downloaded. Users should upgrade the anti-virus software as directed by HIR.

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Equipment

For all questions relating to equipment and equipment-related issues, refer to the User's Guide to Purchasing Equipment, Software, and Related Services, available from the Committee on House Administration.

Routine administrative requests (equipment, computer services, etc.) should be directed to the appropriate administrative offices under the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). For further information relating to any of the CAO's services, please refer to the CAO's Web site on the Intranet (<http://onlinecao.house.gov/>) or call First Call/One Call at x58000.

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Travel

General

Travel by Members, Members' employees, and vendors in support of the official and representational duties of that Member to the district from which elected is official travel.

Ordinary and necessary expenses associated with official travel are reimbursable.

Official travel includes local travel and travel away from home overnight to conduct official and representational duties, when returning to the duty station or residence is impractical.

Living expenses and commuting expenses are not reimbursable. Living expenses include meals, housing, and other personal expenses incurred at the Member or employee's residence or duty station. Commuting expenses are transportation expenses incurred by the Member or employees between their residence and duty station.

Official travel, paid for with the MRA, may not be for personal, political, campaign, or committee purposes.

Official travel cannot originate from or terminate at a campaign event. Official travel may not be combined with or related to travel or travel-related expenses paid for with campaign funds.

Official travel may not exceed 60 consecutive days.

Members have two duty stations: their Congressional District and Washington, D.C.

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Vendor Official Travel

Official travel also includes travel by a vendor when traveling to provide service or training to Member offices.

A vendor is an employee of a private company that provides maintenance and support for equipment and software (computer and non-computer) under a valid House contract or working on a time and material basis.

All travel costs must be negotiated and agreed upon in writing by both parties prior to vendor travel. Offices are encouraged to utilize the federal government per diem rates established by the General Services Administration for vendor travel costs as a benchmark. For a listing of the per diem rates by state and locality, see <http://policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/perdiem/travel.shtml>

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Unexpected Official Travel

Official travel includes travel to an official point from a location visited on personal travel, if the travel to the official point is necessitated by an unexpected official and representational duty (e.g. previously unscheduled House vote, natural disaster, or civil disorder). In such cases, return travel to the point of personal destination is considered official and reimbursable.

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Combined Travel

Combined travel is travel by a Member or their employees for the primary purpose of supporting the official and representational duties of the member, but includes an intervening destination or an additional time period that is

included for personal purposes.

Combined travel requires that:

1. The primary purpose of the travel must be official and representational. The personal segment of the combined travel may not be purchased at a government rate or be purchased with a Government Travel Card.
2. The traveler seeks reimbursement for either the government rate of the direct route and means to the destination required for official and representational business, or the actually traveled fare, whichever is less.
3. The traveler personally pays any additional expenses incurred as a result of the personal travel.
4. The traveler attaches a brief memo to the voucher submitted for combined travel reimbursement, stating that the official travel and personal travel was combined for personal convenience.

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Official Travel Expenses

Official travel expenses including transportation, lodging, meals (excluding alcohol), fees (parking, tolls, ticket change fees, etc.), and other ordinary and necessary incidental expenses while on official travel status are reimbursable.

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Shared Official Travel Expenses

Official travel expenses may be shared by more than one Member or Committee office. The division of expenses must accurately reflect each traveler's expenses, and offices may only pay for the expenses of the Member, staff, and authorized vendors.

See Government Travel Card (43). See Town Hall meetings (22).

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Chartered Aircraft

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to chartering an aircraft for official travel are reimbursable when:

1. Passengers are restricted to Members, their employees, and their immediate

family members (spouse, child, parent), the names of whom must be stated on the voucher.

2. If an immediate family member uses a chartered aircraft the Member may seek reimbursement for the full cost of the chartered aircraft and the family member must submit a check to the Office of Finance payable to the U.S. Treasury equivalent to the cost of a comparable commercial first class fare. A letter explaining the reason for its submission must accompany the check.

See Disbursements (42).

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Corporate or Private Aircraft

A Member and/or their employees who travel via corporate, business, or privately owned aircraft in support of the conduct of official and representational duties must reimburse the entity providing the flight, for the fair market value of the flight. To determine the fair market value of such a flight, apply the following:

1. When the travel is via a previously or regularly scheduled flight by the corporation, business, or individual, the entity must be reimbursed based on the cost of a commercial first class flight to the nearest location served by a commercial passenger airline. If only coach rates are provided at the nearest location, the Member must reimburse the cost of a commercial coach rate.
2. When the flight is scheduled specifically for Member use, payment will be made based on the cost of an equivalent commercial chartered flight to that location.

Prior to scheduling travel provided by any corporation, business, or individual, a Member or employee must verify that the person has authority under its FAA certification to accept payment for travel as set forth above. Contact the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct at x57103.

See Privately-Owned Vehicles (42).

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Government Rate Eligibility

Government rates are available to Members and employees to support the conduct of official travel.

To be eligible for Government rates when purchasing tickets for official travel, Members and employees may present:

1. The Government Travel Card.
2. An Official Travel Authorization (OTA) coupon available from the Finance Office. (Some airlines only allow the government rate for tickets purchased with the government travel card.)

Contact the General Services Administration (GSA) to obtain a listing of schedules and fares of the federal contract air, rail, and bus carriers, car rental companies, and hotels/motels.

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Officially Leased Vehicles

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the lease of a vehicle in support of the conduct of official and representational duties are reimbursable.

Non-governmental use of such a vehicle may be made only when such use is:

1. During the course of and generally along the route of a day's official itinerary.
2. Incidental to the day's official and representational business.
3. De minimis in nature, frequency, and time consumed.
4. Does not otherwise constitute a significant activity or event.

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Short-Term

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to short-term vehicle rental are reimbursable. Rental may not exceed 60 consecutive days.

The government discount rates offered by some rental car companies include:

1. Unlimited free mileage.
2. Collision damage waiver (CDW) at no additional cost.

Cars rented at the government rate should include the CDW. Not all rental car franchises offer the government rate with CDW included. To ensure CDW coverage, offices can make their rental car reservations through the Combined Airlines Ticket Office (CATO). CATO is located at B-222 Longworth Building.

If an office does not use CATO then the Committee recommends the following:

1. At time of the reservation, indicate that the rental is for official government use at the government rate with CDW included.
2. At the time of rental, use the Government Travel Card (or present official travel authorizations (OTA) to the rental company) and confirm that the car is being rented at a government rate with CDW included. The employee must verify that collision damage waiver is included, as simply receiving the government rate does not automatically ensure inclusion of this insurance.

Offices may obtain an Official Travel Authorization coupon from the Finance

Office.

If the government rate is unavailable the cost of CDW is reimbursable.

Personal accident insurance (PAI), personal effects coverage (PEC), and equivalent insurance policies are not reimbursable.

If an employee on official and representational business is involved in an accident with a rental car, notify the Office of General Counsel at x59700.

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Long-Term

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to a long-term rental or lease of a vehicle by a Member in the Member's District are reimbursable.

1. A Member has two leasing options:

a. A Member may lease a vehicle for a period that does not exceed the Member's congressional term.

b. The Member may lease a vehicle for a period that exceeds the current Congressional term, but must submit a signed letter that acknowledges personal responsibility to fulfill any outstanding obligation stemming from such a lease in the event the Member's service to the House ends prior to the lease agreement. Such letters should be attached to the negotiated lease and submitted to the Office of Administrative Counsel (102 Ford Building).

2. The Committee recommends that Members submit leases to the Administrative Counsel for review prior to being signed by the Member and lessor, since the Member is personally liable for payments under any lease not in compliance with House Rules and Committee regulations.

3. Termination notices should be forwarded to the Administrative Counsel.

4. Leases may not include a purchase option.

5. Lessor-required insurance may be reimbursed. Security deposits are not reimbursable.

6. The Committee recommends that long-term vehicle leases begin on the first day of the month.

7. Monthly payments for a long-term vehicle lease may be made in advance.

The House will authorize disbursement of funds under the terms of the lease agreement only if the lease agreement complies with the Rules of the House and the Regulations of the Committee on House Administration. The House will not authorize disbursement of funds to make payments under the terms of the lease agreement until the Administrative Counsel has reviewed the lease and has signed the Attachment.

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Expenses

Expenses related to leased vehicles (both short-term and long-term) including but not limited to the following are reimbursable:

1. The actual monthly cost of the lease (not applicable to short-term)
2. The cost of insurance incurred pursuant to the terms of the lease (not applicable to short-term)
3. Excess mileage charges incurred pursuant to the terms of the lease
4. Incidental operating expenses (gasoline, oil, general maintenance, etc.)
5. Wear and tear (not applicable to short-term)
6. Registration fees (not applicable to short-term)
7. Property tax during the term of the lease (not applicable to short-term)

Security deposits, termination fees, traffic violations, depreciation loss based on premature return, and similar fees, penalties or charges may not be reimbursed.

See Advance Payments (42).

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Privately-Owned Vehicles

The costs of transportation by Member or employee via a privately owned or privately leased vehicle while on official and representational business reimbursable on a rate per mile basis. The maximum rates per mile are:

Automobile: \$.445

Motorcycle: \$.305

Airplane: \$1.07

For the current applicable rates, contact the Committee on House Administration at x58281.

Only mileage for use of an aircraft that is privately owned by either a Member or the Member's employee is reimbursable.

See Disbursements (42) and Corporate or Private Aircraft (39).

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Travel Promotional Awards

Free travel, mileage, discounts, upgrades, coupons, etc., awarded at the sole discretion of a company as a promotional award may be used at the discretion of the Member or the Member's employee. The Committee encourages the official use of these travel promotional awards wherever practicable.

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Disbursements

Advance Payments

There are instances in which advance payments may be required and may be paid from the MRA. Unless specifically authorized by the Committee, only the following advance payments are reimbursable:

1. Public information booth rental
2. Educational expenses
3. Authorized insurance premiums
4. Newspaper and periodical subscriptions
5. Telecommunications devices
6. Post-office box rentals
7. Original Equipment Manufacturers' warranties
8. Monthly payments of a long-term automobile lease

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Authorized Methods of Payment

Official travel-related expenses may be paid with cash, check, personal credit card, etc., or the Government Travel Card for Members and employees and reimbursed through the Finance Office.

See Government Travel Card (43), Dues (16), and Disbursements (3).

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Reimbursement and Direct Payment

Disbursements from the MRA are paid on a reimbursable basis or by direct

payment (to vendors) and require:

1. The Member's signature, certifying that the expense was incurred in support of the Member's official and representational duties to the district from which elected.
2. Supporting documentation (receipt, lease, bill etc.).

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Government Travel Card

The Government Travel Card is available for Member and employee use for official travel and travel-related expenses. Such travel expenses incurred on this or any other credit/charge card, are directly reimbursable to the traveler or to the cardholder with a copy of the credit card statement, an accompanying voucher, and applicable receipts. When reimbursement is to be made to the cardholder for expenses incurred by someone other than the cardholder, the description of services stated on the voucher must clearly identify the traveler and the expense incurred.

Members and employees are reminded that the Government Travel Card is for official travel purposes only. Use of this card for any personal or non-official purchases is prohibited. The Government Travel Card may be used by the cardholder only. The cardholder may use the card to purchase travel-related services (airline tickets, hotel expenses, etc.) for other authorized travelers.

The Office of Finance will monitor the monthly aging report received from the vendor and alert offices of delinquencies. The Office of Finance will not intervene with the vendor in the event of a delinquency.

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Seeking Reimbursement: Vouchers

Requests for reimbursement or payment from the MRA must be submitted on a completed voucher to the Finance Office.

Each voucher must include the following:

1. Member's original signature
2. Dates of service(s) provided, or date of purchase
3. Detailed description of the expenses incurred
4. Payee (the party to whom the payment or reimbursement is being made). For payment to individuals, the payee's tax identification number or Social Security number must be included on the voucher. The payee may be one of the following:

a. Member

- b. Member's employee
- c. Designated vendor (this includes credit and charge card companies)
- 5. Supporting documentation (original invoices, original receipts, etc.)
- 6. Amount due

Member offices must provide the Office of Finance with original receipts, unless original receipts are unavailable. In such cases, Members may submit the voucher with the available documentation (e.g., copy of original credit card statement) and a signed certification stating: "I certify that this is a true copy. This is my only submission for payment."

In instances where original receipts are not provided (bus fares, pay phone calls, etc.) or for taxi fares under \$10.00 the information on the voucher is sufficient.

When submitting reimbursement for travel expenses, the voucher must also indicate the name of the traveler for whom the expenses were incurred.

The Committee strongly recommends that Member offices submit their vouchers for travel reimbursements at least fifteen days before the payment due date to assist the Office of Finance in providing timely reimbursements and prevent Members from incurring late fees or delinquency problems.

See Custodial Services (23), Educational Expenses (16), and Interpreting and Translating Services (18).

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Expired Appropriations

The Salaries and Expenses appropriation for the House of Representatives, which includes MRA funds, is withdrawn on September 30 two years after the year for which the funds were originally appropriated.

If an office requests reimbursement for an official and representational expense incurred during a year for which the appropriation has been withdrawn, the Office of Finance will determine if an amount sufficient to pay the expense would have been available if the appropriation had not been withdrawn. If no funds would have been available, then the expense is the personal liability of the Member.

If the expense would have been payable had it been timely submitted, notwithstanding the expired appropriation, then the expense may be paid from a currently available allowance.

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General

Members of Congress may form a Congressional Member Organization (CMO) in order to pursue common legislative objectives.

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Registration

Each Congress, CMOs must register with the Committee on House Administration.

CMOs must provide the following information:

1. Name
2. Statement of Purpose
3. Officers of the CMO
4. Employee designated to work on issues related to the CMO

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Membership

Members of both the House and Senate may participate in CMO, but at least one of the Officers of the CMO must be a Member of the House. The participation of Senators in a CMO does not impact the scope of authorized CMO activities in any regard.

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Funding and Resources

CMOs have no separate corporate or legal identity. A CMO is not an employing authority. The MRA may not directly support a CMO as an independent entity. A CMO may not be assigned separate office space.

Neither CMOs nor individual Members may accept goods, funds, or services from private organizations or individuals to support the CMO. Members may use personal funds to support the CMO.

A Member of a CMO, in support of the objectives of that CMO, may utilize employees (including shared employees) and official resources under the control

of the Member to assist the CMO in carrying out its legislative objectives, but no employees may be appointed in the name of a CMO.

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Communications

CMOs may not use the Frank, nor may a Member lend his or her Frank to a CMO.

A Member may use official resources for communications related to the purpose of a CMO. Any such communications must comply with the Franking Regulations.

Members may devote a section of their official Web site to CMO issues, but CMOs may not have independent Web pages.

A Member may use inside mail to communicate information related to a CMO.

Members may prepare material related to CMO issues for dissemination.

Official funds may not be used to print or pay for stationery for the CMO.

Members may refer to their membership in a CMO on their official stationery.

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Congressional Staff Organizations

General

A Congressional Staff Organization (CSO) is an organization, a majority of whose members are House employees, that exists for the purpose of facilitating interaction among congressional staff.

Each Congress, CSOs must register with the Committee on House Administration.

At least one officer of a CSO must be an employee of the House, and all officers must be employees of the House or Senate.

A CSO should contact the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct at x57103 before accepting anything of monetary value from a private source.

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Official Resources

Other than as specified in this section, House staff that participates in a CSO

may make only incidental use of official resources for activities related to a CSO. A CSO is not an employing authority of the House and may not be assigned separate office space.

Each Congress, in order to use official resources of the House (i.e., inside mail, House Intranet, etc.), a CSO must register with the Committee on House Administration. A sponsoring Member must submit a letter, on official letterhead, to the Committee with the following information:

1. Name of the staff organization
2. Statement of purpose of the staff organization
3. Officers of the staff organization, including contact information
4. Specify which of the following resources the CSO requests use of:
 - a. Inside mail
 - b. House Intranet site
 - c. Postbox at House Postal Operations
5. Individuals designated to maintain web and mail services on behalf of the CSO (if applicable)

After the CSO is registered, the sponsoring Member may submit, at any time, a letter requesting access to Inside Mail, a House postbox, or a presence on the House Intranet for CSO related activities.

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MEMBER'S HANDBOOK

MEMBERS' REPRESENTATIONAL ALLOWANCE

STAFF

OFFICIAL & REPRESENTATIONAL EXPENSES

